

### Final FirstNet RFP hits the streets

FCW By Mark Rockwell

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The final [request for proposals](#) for a nationwide, wireless, interoperable broadband communications network for first responders has been issued, and the First Responder Network Authority said it addresses industry's questions about the business model and spectrum.

"We have developed this RFP in an open forum to create a 'first of its kind' public/private partnership for the network," FirstNet CEO Mike Poth said in a statement. "As we move into the next phase of the process, we look forward to receiving competitive offerings to deliver the best possible network for public safety."

The RFP, which was released on Jan. 13, has over 50 sections, maps and tables, and it follows more than a year of dialogue with public safety and industry leaders on its objectives and scope. FirstNet issued 13 requests for information and a series of draft RFPs, convened two public industry days, answered more than 650 questions related to network specifications, and met with interested vendors before crafting the final RFP.

FirstNet spokesman Ryan Oremland told FCW the business model for the plan has been fleshed out in the final RFP to provide incentives for industry, including specified spectrum and payment arrangements.

According to the RFP's statement of objectives, the winning bidder will build and operate the system with 20 MHz of 700 MHz broadband spectrum under a lease agreement. In return, the company can monetize any unused network capacity.

Section B of the RFP spells out a phased-in scale of yearly minimum contractor reimbursement payments to FirstNet that would take into account a contractor's anticipated deployment and operational ramp-up.

The RFP also has a section on cybersecurity that incorporates input from industry and public safety officials in response to a special notice FirstNet released last October, Oremland said.

Although the RFP does not specify what kinds of [bidders](#) it's looking for, telecommunications carriers are the obvious choice.

Those carriers have been largely mum on their bidding plans for the project. At least one federal agency has [expressed interest](#) in using the network, though. Department of Homeland Security Deputy CIO Margie Graves and Customs and Border Protection CTO Wolf Tombesaid last January that FirstNet is just one of the emerging mobile communications technologies DHS is seeking to exploit.

Questions about the RFP must be submitted by Feb. 12, capability statements are due by March 17, and proposals are due by April 29. FirstNet officials said they expect to award the contract in the fourth quarter of 2016. Agency personnel will go over the details of the complex document in a webinar on Jan. 15 from 1 to 3 p.m.